

Wesleyan Magazine of Creative Arts



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of Creative Arts

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War Song for Mine to the Guns That Would Kill Him

Faces, faces, blurred into a sound . . .
Sleepless found reproaching me,
Screaming, "No!"
"You must stay here and remember;
Go with those who went before."
Sounds, red sounds, dark red,
Rose dark red, and somehow artificial . . .
"Remember us. You must remember us."
Us, me?
I would not see you.
Blench sounds.
I am leaving,
Red sounds,
Fire-deep, clotted blood
Red sounds . . .

I am leaving,
Looking for a blues sky sound,
A golden-toned, love-honeyed hum,
Sky blue, dawn gold, free fall sounds.
And you, you gaping ghosts of sounds ago,
I am dancing, dancing on your graves.
Soon you will be battered back by
Toe taps, hand claps,
Salvation Army march steps,
Long leaps, and all over Hell beneath my feet,
Locking you there with love sounds,
Flying feather wind songs,
Gold dust buzz on bees' feet songs,
Ocean birds at sunrise songs,
And soft, sigh-blue summer sounds.

—Margaret MacKenzie

I can remember
Discourses on rain
And its effect
On life in the Far East.
Also I remember
The little bald man
Explaining that condensing
or something
Causes rain.
I've seen pictures
Of hurricanes
And electrical storms
And rain in torrents.
But rain was never like this.
I can see it running
Off the roof
Down the drains
Into the washed grass
And small bright pebbles.
It is sliding off
The rose petals
Drop after drop
And tumbling its way
Down through the pine straw
There to keep the moisture
At the roots.
The bird bath is over-flowing.
Steam from the street
Hovers over the ditches
Where the rain water rushes
Down to the corner
And falls into the drains
Put there by the city to avoid
Flooded streets.

—June Shiver



—Karen Wickwire



ALBERT IS DEAD, DAMN IT

Jennifer, put out your cigarette
and let me tell you the news.
Jennifer, please listen to me—I must tell you.
I won't be here much longer and . . .
the grapevine gossip can wait
. can't it?

Jennifer . . .
Albert died.
Did you know Albert?
You didn't?
. oh.

Can you understand, Jennifer
that you missed alot?
By not exerting an effort
to know others like Albert?

Were you too busy, Jennifer . . . eating cigarettes
and
 decaying between four walls of the
same four rooms?

Albert lived Jennifer,
And Albert still lives because . . .
Albert lived with MADNESS.
And Jennifer, someone like that, CANNOT
die in one frail moment in time.

I loved Albert, Jennifer, but not everyone did.
You see, Albert had this annoying habit of asking "why."
And y'know Albert could be so obnoxious sometimes
just because he wouldn't give up without an answer.
And sometimes you'd just want to kick him for being so smart!
'Cause people who don't got the time for petty trivia can . . .
"get on your nerves." You've said so yourself.

Jennifer, are you listening to me?
You remember how Albert hated churches?
Yet Albert used to love to sing old Baptist hymns.
You see, Albert lived for a cause . . .
 a faith
 a love.

Sometimes Albert would smile yet
sometimes Albert would be so pre-occupied with
a bewildering hurt he couldn't smile
 just then.

Albert cared if you cared.
Albert would love France if you loved Poland.
Yes, Albert was abstract alot and it was fun to be
abstract together.

Jennifer, JENNIFER, do you know how lonely it gets being
abstract . . . alone?
 Jennifer, do you know?
Albert got drunk one Christmas Eve with Joe
and cried, on Christmas Eve.
A strange lot—those few
 . . . intense
 . . . alive
 . . . hurtt

Did you know Albert?
Albert is dead.
Jennifer, did you hear me?
I said, "Albert died."

—Anonymous

I wished to go just up the road a mile or two and could have walked. But early afternoons lie hot and dry, are times for washing clothes or writing letters home below the fan in hopes that air is cooler stirred. So I had little wish to walk and left the room and crossed a hundred yards or so to where the wallas napped inside their taxis, tan and black but powdered red by dust.

"I want to go to Manari's, how much?"
He didn't move . . . I tapped the roof.

"Kya?"

He stared at me and raised his head a bit.

"Mahn, Manari's?" I pointed to the road and then myself.

"Uha," he said, sat up and pulled his matted khaki shirt in place.

"How much to go?" The sun seemed nearer now at two than one. I waited.

"I not go."

"Not go? I'll give you three instead of two."
He shifted, stared at me, then looked away and I looked too, across red scrub land, waiting. "Three."

He put his feet up on the seat.

"A fare, you'll eat." I smiled. He shrugged. "Not go, I do not wish."

I stepped away as he lay down, and dust came through my toes and settled on my feet.

—Mary Abbott Waite



—Karen Wickwire

SONNET

When morning burns the tissue-paper night,
And stars melt in a sparkling yellow round,
With reindeer leaps of softly laughing light
That ride the night-time's teardrops to the ground;
When he bends down to breathe upon the snow,
And sleepy clover yawn and blink their eyes,
And peek around white covers shy and slow,
To warm their shaky legs, to stretch and rise;
When swift he waves his hand above the earth,
And silken mummies quiver in reply,
Entrusting to his hand the fiery birth
Of laughing, softly leaping butterfly;
My nighttime spirit melts beneath his breath,
Leaps softly to his hand and smiles at death.

—Pat Ondo

UPON STRIKING NINE

The Hand creeps
Like some strange evangel's,
Then tolls (louder than I care to hear)
What I have been warned of:
To reveal the purpose
Of beauty gels
And colored masks.

Saying yet another,
Louder warning
For those who watch the Face.
Yesterday is no-time;
Now is yes-time.
Move faster in this hour—
Then you live more within this hour . . .
The bargain needs no signature
For midnight takes you
Anyway.

—Nancy Greer



—Karen Wickwire

WORD-CHASM

I hear

A strange little wistful whistle as a
Neon sound slides down my mind;

I hear

A word string along with the one that went before:
I am craving for the impact of a hole-word
For my mind to fall into,
To hear that whistle
Again sliding on down.

—Nancy Greer

Raindrops on a silent pool;

A golden leaf afloat;

My world complete.

—Johanna Abkarian

THE STREAM

White cold snow: iced earth.
Snow-crushed face: iced eyes, cheeks, mouth.
White cold snow: flamed heart.

—Susan Issacs

The stream winds slowly,
A caravan across the sand,
Carrying gentrinsic cargo
To journey's end.

—Donna Hartsfield



—Karen Wickwire



—Mary Beth Taylor

MY FISH

Silken swish of my fish, what inside

Makes you glide?

Does a tiny motor purring at your end

Make you bend?

Or is someone's finger playing with your fin

Deep down in?

I wish you'd tell me. Is it that your quiver

Makes you shiver?

Won't your quiver and your shiver make you sink,

Don't you think?

Is there something in your paper-carton sea?

Could it be

That a man-of-war (or jelly monster, too)

Chases you?

And as here and there again my fish was flitting,

I was sitting,

Saying if he never listened, not a bit,

I would quit.

I would give this up and close the paper lid,

So I did.

—Pat Ondo

I used to think I saw you.

I mean I used to think.

I thought I could see you.

Your reflection,

If I tried,

I could discern

on the very bottom of a very still
green pool.

And the eyes of the fishes

were green-gold from the truth,

And the water was like liquid grass.

Truth was there, a naked filligree

fish-bone, white and smooth,

Set in the sand like a strange

pale insect.

I say I used to see.

Now . . . the sand is there.

Of that I'm almost sure.

—Susan Lutters

JANUARY

This surrealistic day hangs in the air—
Gray and void as an unspoken obscenity.

I wait for some remembered happiness
to shatter the atmosphere into splinters.
. . . Think about the smell of Autumn . .

football games . . . a crowd of people
looking like confetti strewn beneath the sky.

Days floating in sunlight . .

Days with no conscience

But memories recalled, are only dreams—

surfacing for air,

only to drown in the zero of today.

This day throws a rope of despair around my neck—
not tight enough to bring forgetfulness.

This January day-limp and chill as death—
that hangs in the air—

waiting for me around every corner.

—Ann Spring



—June Shiver



—Lou Ellen Semler

FROM LIFE*

Old Women—
with eroded features,
with hawk eyes peering out from under
overhanging eyebrows,
with weather lines embossed upon
their foreheads—
Are majestically beautiful
like Broken Mountainsides.

*"The 'Grandes Dames' Who Grace America."
Life, January 26, 1968, pp.43-52.

—Pris Gautier



CONTENT

Do not offer me the exotic tastes
of fleeting infatuations—
Garlic and cinnamon,
Citron and wine.
I am nauseous from such fancies.
But give me the easy pleasures
of day by day friendships—
Goat's milk and biscuits,
Wheat and brown figs.
I am filled, and content.

—Betsy Martin





the Conversation

I see your nameless face across the table,
as we watch each other eat,
and clutch at conversation . .
"do you know . . .?" and "where've you been"
and make some profound remark on "what movies you have seen?"
Then the jokes to see what kind of mind you have—
and "will you?" . . . "won't you?" . . . "why not?"
Your thoughts are so transparent,
and mine, so trite.
A conversation chasing its tail . . .

—Ann Spring



TASTE OF COBWEBS

Today walking past a tree, a cobweb brushed against my face, and I remembered. That day we sat barefooted and the Atlanta Braves were losing on the black transistor radio. The March day was cool—not cold—but my legs had goose-bumps and envied the rough warmth of your Levis. We sat and drank wine out of small jelly glasses and you talked about the places you had been, to the chalky cliffs and wet valleys where these grapes were nurtured. And we were living in the year of our vintage, living that hot summer in '53, living the mellow shadows of an August evening. With our eyes closed we could see the purple vineyards on the Rhine that summer, that afternoon as the warm tingle of wine took us there closer and deeper. You said, "—Cobwebs. It tastes of cobwebs, yes."

—Betsy Martin



